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ABSTRACT

The nature of youth gangs is explored, with suggestions for gang prevention and intervention. The emphasis is on organizing citizens, especially at the neighborhood level, to affect all community institutions. Suggestions are offered for citizens' groups to look at critical areas in schooling, incarceration, law enforcement, community programs, and their relationships to one another. Gangs are changing, becoming larger, developing infrastructures and linkages with adults, and growing increasingly violent. Cities that have been regarded as "green," or open to gang takeover, are being subjected to adult efforts to establish gangs for drug and other criminal tie-ins. Community involvement should stem from informal beginnings, from ad hoc citizen groups addressing urban problems. A relatively impartial organization, not a branch of the government with other responsibilities, should sponsor anti-gang efforts, helping to establish forums and action groups to address problems. Then, in addition to facilitating collaboration among school and community programs and enhancing the quality of their services, cities must help establish real neighborhood communities where residents are not alienated and where little tolerance for crime is shown. Suggestions for additional reading follow each chapter. (Contains 2 figures and 183 references.) (SLD)

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